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Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

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THE GOSPEL OF BUDDHA

By

DR. PAUL CARUS

Pocket Edition. Illustrated. Cloth, \$1.00; flexible leather, \$1.50

This edition is a photographic reproduction of the *edition de luxe* which was printed in Leipsic in 1913 and ready for shipment in time to be caught by the embargo Great Britain put on all articles exported from Germany. Luckily two copies of the above edition escaped, and these were used to make the photographic reproduction of this latest edition. While the Buddhist Bible could not in any way be considered a contraband of war yet the publishers were forced to hold back many hundred orders for the book on account of orders in council of Great Britain.

When the book was first published His Majesty, the King of Siam, sent the following communication through his private secretary:

"Dear Sir: I am commanded by His Most Gracious Majesty, the King of Siam, to acknowledge, with many thanks, the receipt of your letter and the book, *The Gospel of Buddha*, which he esteems very much; and he expresses his sincerest thanks for the very hard and difficult task of compilation you have considerably undertaken in the interest of our religion. I avail myself of this favorable opportunity to wish the book every success."

His Royal Highness, Prince Chandradat Chudhadharn, official delegate of Siamese Buddhism to the Chicago Parliament of Religions, writes:

"As regards the contents of the book, and as far as I could see, it is one of the best Buddhist Scriptures ever published. Those who wish to know the life of Buddha and the spirit of his Dharma may be recommended to read this work which is so ably edited that it comprises almost all knowledge of Buddhism itself."

The book has been introduced as a reader in private Buddhist schools of Ceylon. Mrs. Marie H. Higgins, Principal of the Musaeus School and Orphanage for Buddhist Girls, Cinnamon Gardens, Ceylon, writes as follows:

"It is the best work I have read on Buddhism. This opinion is endorsed by all who read it here. I propose to make it a text-book of study for my girls."

THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING COMPANY

122 S. MICHIGAN AVENUE

CHICAGO

ILLINOIS



MOSLEM COLLEGE AT BIDAR.
After Law, *Promotion of Learning in India*. (See page 767.)

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ON THE DAY OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.¹

BY ANTONMARIA LUPI.

[TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.—Scholars are well aware that the birth of Jesus has been assigned to every month of the year; and reference is sometimes found (e. g., *Encyclopædia Biblica*, 3346) to an article in which the whole matter is canvassed, though in a work not easily obtained, and never translated into English.² It has so much curious interest for the student that I offer a translation, endeavoring by both phrase and typography to reproduce something of the quaint formality of the original.

The author was celebrated in his time as a man of vast and varied learning. Born at Florence in 1695, he entered the order of Jesuits, and from 1733 till his death in 1737 he taught rhetoric in the Jesuit Collegio de' Nobili at Palermo. Here was also one of those academies so famous in the Italy of the Renaissance and later, the *Accademia dei Pastori Ereini* (this fanciful name apparently signifies "Shepherds of the Eraei Mountains," lying back of Palermo), of much repute in the literary life of the time. He was appointed to pronounce an academic discourse before this society on the festival of the Nativity in 1734, and again in 1735. On the former occasion he read a learned dissertation on the year of the Saviour's birth; and on the latter, the one given here. He planned a third on the same general topic, but his unexpected death prevented.]

THE year is now exactly fulfilled, most learned Coryphæus, most gentle Fellow-shepherds, the year, I say, is now exactly fulfilled, since I, chosen by You to discourse in this Assembly so renowned, and so learned, on the Mystery of that divine Manifestation, called to our minds by the Church in the present solemn Festival, undertook to examine in the most certain light of Chronology which was exactly the year, which the fortunate day, on which the Eternal Word, assuming our feeble frame, first vouchsafed to show

¹ Translated by Earl Morse Wilbur.

² *Dissertazioni, Lettere, ed altre Operette del chiarissimo Padre Antonmaria Lupi Fiorentino.* Faenza, 1785. I, p. 219.

himself amongst us. And as for that part of the question, which regarded the year of the sublime Nativity, I demonstrated (if I can not say the truth, yet I believe at least the probability) that the great benefit was conferred upon the World under the Consulate of Decimus Laelius Balbus, and of Caius Antistius Vetus, in the nine and thirtieth year of the Reign of Augustus, five years and seven days prior to that, which by us is reckoned as the common Era. But that part of the question, which must needs be made clear, determining the month, and the day of the divine Birth, was left undecided, awaiting the researches of more able Speakers, I being prevented by scantness of time from possibly undertaking at that time the difficult investigation. Now therefore, as your reverend commands require of me, that I return afresh to discourse of the great Mystery; methinks I can not forbear to complete that work, of which I had already planned the outline; and to set forth in clear light which one amongst all the days of the year that was, on which it pleased God, made man, to shed luster by his wondrous Birth at Bethlehem. We come however in our search into the midst of a very forest of opinions, various indeed, and conflicting; and though forsaken by the light of Astronomy, and of History, on which Chronology so much relies, we perceive at least what must seriously be maintained in harmony with Ecclesiastical Tradition.

I scarcely know, most learned Academicians, whether there be found in any of the periods renowned in Sacred Story less agreement among Writers, than in this, as to fixing, not the year only, but the month, and the day of the Virgin Birth from Mary. There is not a month in the year, unless perhaps July be excepted, that hath not found supporters, who proclaimed it as the Natal month; nor is there a day, so to say, in the months, that hath not been ambitious to be adorned with dignity so fair. January was amongst the first to have eminent supporters of its claim. John of Nicaea, an ancient Greek Writer, cited by Père François Combefis,³ an eminent Scholar of the Order of Saint Dominic, in the supplement which he published to the *Library of the Greek Fathers*, witnesseth, that it had been the opinion of Saint James the Apostle, that the Saviour was born on the sixth of January, whereon the Church celebrates the Mystery of the Epiphany. It may be said of a surety, that this conviction was very ancient; seeing that the Christians of Egypt celebrated the Festival of the Nativity on this day, as Cassian,⁴ a celebrated writer, recorded; and the Church at

³ *Noctum auctuaris*, Vol. II, p. 297.

⁴ *Collationes*, X.

Jerusalem likewise so noted in its Calendars; the which is attested by an Egyptian Monk Cosmas, surnamed Indopleustes, by reason of the voyage that he made to India; as we have it in the Text of this Writer, brought to light, no long time since, by Père Dr. Bernard de Montfaucon, a celebrated Antiquarian of the Order of Saint Benedict; and many of the ancient Christians were of this persuasion, as to which authentic and undoubted witness is borne to us by Saint Epiphanius.⁵ The most ancient Heretics, followers of the fanatical Basilides, also themselves proclaimed January as the Natal month of Christ, as did the Churches in Egypt, in whose bosom they themselves were born; but afterwards disagreeing with the Catholics even in this, they kept as the anniversary of this Festival the tenth day of the aforesaid month. To this witnesseth Clement of Alexandria, a most ancient and authoritative Writer, in the first book of his *Stromata*.

There was none among the Ancients that had imagined, that the divine Word had wished to select for his Nativity the month of February. But there hath been found among the modern Critics beyond the Alps one that hath not hesitated to assert, that the Saviour was born about the middle of that frozen month. In favor of this view Johann Albrecht Fabricius in his *Bibliographia*, Chapter x, citeth Johann Christoph Wagenseil,⁶ but as I have not succeeded in finding the Works of this Writer, even so have I not so much as been able to learn what reasons determined him to this conclusion.

March hath on its side a Critic far more renowned and of greater repute than was Wagenseil, Samuel Bochart having declared himself for March in his *Hieroicoicon*,⁷ a Man the most highly accomplished in the Oriental Tongues whom the Protestant party hath had. But this Author showed himself as weak in supporting this view as he had formerly been happy in many of his ingenious conjectures; wherefore on this point he hath remained singular, or at least without any adherents of repute.

And now, O most gentle Fellow-shepherds, we are come to the most delightful month of Spring. Certain unknown, and mayhap ignoble Innovators in Egypt would fain have acclaimed the month of April for its contribution to human joys, as witnesseth Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, I., wherefore they declared that

⁵ *Haecres.* 51. This opinion hath at length been called in question by Père Magnan in his *Problema de anno Nativit. Christi*, p. 328.

⁶ In *Sota*.

⁷ Liber. II, 44.

the 24th day, or the 25th of the month *Pharmuthi*, which correspondeth to the nineteenth, or the twentieth of our April, had been that happy day, on the which there blossomed forth the fair flower from the Root of Jesse. Yet this opinion, the untimely offspring of a disordered mind, rather than the child of sound Learning, died with its sponsors; so that during the course of fifteen centuries the memory of it scarce remained in history, save in the report of the renowned writer. But it is indeed true, that to our unhappy age hath fallen the miserable distinction of seeing bud forth afresh an opinion so ill rooted. One writer, in religion a Protestant, who concealing his own name, wished to be called *Temporario*, in a Work on Chronology, which he published, having placed the Incarnation of the Word in the hottest months of Summer, afterwards placed the Nativity in the season of Spring. More recently yet, that is in 1710, there issued from the press in London a little Work on the year, and on the Natal month of Christ, with the name of Peter Allix⁸ Professor of Theology. Now in this work an attempt is made to re-establish upon foundations slender, and ill constructed, the old and abandoned view that the Lord was born in April.

They have been more in number, but not more happy, nor of better repute, that have favored May. There hath shown himself inclined to May the modern Writer just now cited, Peter Allix; and the above-mentioned Clement of Alexandria relateth,⁹ that certain, who were rather curious investigators of what is new, than wise discerners of the truth, had said, that on the twentieth day of May, amongst the roses and the flowers, the Great Nazarene was born. There held to this opinion with the passage of years, and for the most part embraced it, an unfortunate sect of heretics, precursors of Arianism; who, persistently denying the Eternal Word, were by the Catholic party called by the opprobrious name of Alogi. These Alogi then (as Saint Epiphanius stateth in his list of heresies, at the fifty-first Heresy)¹⁰ divided into two factions: the one held that the Saviour had appeared amongst us on the twenty-second of May; the other party of them later celebrated the Nativity on the twenty-first of June. You could scarce decide,

⁸ Vide *Memoir de Trevoux*, ann. 1715, p. 1299.

⁹ *Stromata*, I, and also more recently Alfonso des Vignoles, Vol. II. *Bibliothecae Germanicae*, p. 71.

¹⁰ *Huer*. li. I am disgusted that so disgraceful and detestable a company should influence M. de le Nauze, who in a dissertation quoted in abridged form in volume v. of the Paris Royal Academy of Inscriptions, p. 149, Amsterdam edition, 1741, maintaineth that the Birth of J. C. fell on the 25th of May. See Père Magnan quoted above, p. 333.

which of the two factions argued the more imprudently, seeing that the holy Writer hath not deemed their reasons worth relating.

The month of July lacketh (as we have said) any pretensions, or champions. August also lacked them; had not that same Johann Christoph Wagenseil,¹¹ who had taken February under his protection, declared himself also for August, pointing out, that it seemed to him probable, that it was at the end of August that the Virgin Birth had taken place.

As for September it is true that many Chronologists, and they of high repute, have come to believe it the natal month of the Desire of the Nations. The misfortune is, however, that the greater part of these Writers, discredited in the Catholic party by their blind enlistment on the side of the modern Heresies, at once put those of intelligence in mistrust, whether this opinion too be not the sooner espoused out of desire to oppose the Church of Rome, than because it is supported on foundations, which one may regard as solid and firm. Perhaps the first to advance this conjecture was Matthæus Beroaldus, a very ardent Calvinist, who in the fourth book of his Chronology at the second chapter assigned the general season of the Winter Solstice to the divine Incarnation, hence setting the admirable Nativity forward to the Autumnal Equinox, about the twentieth of September, or toward the beginning of October. This novel view was embraced with applause by the parties opposed to the Church of Rome. In favor of this view Andreas Osiander, a Lutheran Heretic, declared himself; so did also Joseph Scaligar, and Sethus Calvisius, themselves also Calvinists, and vehemently defended it in their works on Chronology.¹² This view was brought to light anew in the past Century by two English Writers, who published Commentaries on the New Testament, Works esteemed in their own sect, and not undervalued by others. Of these the first was Erasmus Schmid,¹³ who contenting himself with placing the divine Nativity in September, but without fixing the day, left to John Lightfoot,¹⁴ who is the other, of whom I was speaking, the glory of fixing the Natal day of Christ on the fifteenth of September. Not for this day in particular, but certainly for the month of September, Samuel Basnagius showed himself inclined, a French Calvinist amongst the refugees in Holland, in his *Exercitationes* against Cardinal Baronius;¹⁵ in the which I doubt not, that he has

¹¹ In *Sota*.

¹² In the appendix to *Opus de emendat. temporum*, and in *Isagogici Canonēs*, lib. iii., annot. 101, 102.

¹³ *Ad Joannis* iii. 30.

¹⁴ *Ad Lucae* ii. 7.

¹⁵ *Ad ann.* xxxvii.

been followed by other Writers less celebrated, of whom I can give you no account.

Up to now, however, this strange opinion hath been confined to the Heretics, amongst whom it had its birth, but hath little interested the Catholics, who have not deemed it worthy of serious refutation; save that at the close of the past Century it was adopted, and ably defended by a Catholic Writer, a Man, to whom not alone France, that bore him, but the whole World of Letters, hath done the justice of believing him a person of really extraordinary, and perhaps unapproachable, erudition. This is that Père Jean Hardouin, who hath so greatly adorned both his own age, and my Religious Order, with the immensely great extent of his Learning; but who at the same time (if I may be suffered the liberty, my Hearers, of speaking thus of a Brother in mine own Order, whom I in other regards so highly revere, and so deservedly admire)—but who at the same time, I say, much tarnished his own lustre by showing himself at times a little too venturesome in conjecture, and a little too set in defending his conjectures. Now this author, in a book of his entitled *Antirrheticum*,¹⁶ wherein he maketh reply to sundry objections, with which he had been faced by a certain clever Antiquarian touching the knowledge of some ancient Medals, declared himself for the opinion, that the Redeemer had been born in September, and he employed all the penetration of his wit, and all the abundance of his erudition, in supporting this opinion, and in undermining its contrary, so Commonly received and so ancient in the Church. It would be an interesting thing to learn one by one, and to examine carefully all the reasons, which he adduceth, partly of his own invention, partly adduced by Authors, who have defended this opinion before him. But one can not embrace all within the brief space prescribed to the speaker by the wise rules of this Assembly.¹⁷

We proceed then the rather to mention the opinions, which favor the other months. To October incline almost all those, that favor September; whence to the beginning of October the honor of the divine Birth is willingly conceded by Beroaldus, Scaliger, Calvisius. It appeareth also to Fabricius, that to this month inclined Isaac Casaubon, a great Scholar among the Huguenots of France, and Matthias Wasmuth, a writer celebrated among the English.

¹⁶ *Antirrheticum*, de *Nummis antiq.*, p. 65.

¹⁷ I will say, however, that this extravagant opinion was confuted by the renowned Monsignore del Torre in his *Antichità di Anso*, and finally by the above cited Père Magnan, p. 336, sqq.

More ancient are those that favor November. Certain are referred to by Saint Epiphanius, who would have the Saviour born on the eighth of that month. For the eighteenth it would appear, that Clement of Alexandria held, an Author so ancient, and so highly esteemed. Nor among moderns hath there been difficulty in finding those who subscribed to these otherwise so little plausible opinions; and in fact, that the Saviour was born in November was defended, no long time since, by Salomon van Til, in the little Work, which he wrote on the year, month, and day of the Nativity of Christ.

The happiest, however, and the most commonly accepted among all the months of the year is the month of December, for which all the Churches of the East, the West, the North, the South, have as it were with one accord declared, and have during the long course of quite seventeen Centuries recognized, and praised as worthy of human redemption the twenty-fifth day of the same: a day, on which the Word made flesh vouchsafed to appear clad in our lowly nature. You may well have discovered, most gentle Fellow-shepherds, that I already hold to this, which is not exactly an opinion (saith Albinus Flaccus in his book *De Divinis officiis*), but indeed a doctrine of the Catholic Church: a doctrine which hath been planted within my bosom not merely by the reverence, with which Ecclesiastical Traditions deserve to be regarded; but by the most firm persuasion, which I hold, that they have wandered from the truth, who on this point thought otherwise. Tell me, most reverend Hearers, and do justice to my choice. Among a host of conflicting opinions, the most of which are seen to be founded rather upon caprice, and on the lust for innovation, than on the sincere, and loyal search for the truth; lacking as we do any chronological evidence, drawn either from Astronomy, or from History; is it not required by every law of sober Criticism, that that judgment be preferred, which hath in its favor the testimony of the most ancient, and the most revered writers of the Church; that one which amongst all Nations, so to say, and through almost all the Centuries was considered as the only true one, the only one handed down to us by the Apostles; that one, which is supported by all the most favorable conjectures; that one, against which no objection can be brought forth, which is not weak, and merely specious? Now such is precisely the common judgment in the Church touching the fortunate day of the Birth of the Saviour. The other opinions referred to are almost all opinions, whose origin, whose currency, whose duration, are known to be narrowly restricted and limited; they are

opinions based often upon arbitrary grounds, often upon the feeblest conjectures, advanced by few Supporters, and they of slight consideration. Where on the other hand is there one, who could now fix the beginning, who could prescribe the limits, who could report the testimonies, which buttress the judgment of the Church? Take, saith Cardinal Baronius,¹⁸ take the Martyrologies, and the Menologies of the Greek Churches, and of the Latin Churches; I might also add, take the Liturgical Books of the Syriac Churches, the Armenian, the Ethiopian, the Coptic, the Illyrian: those will be found, it is true, to differ the one from the other, and from us in points not seldom essential to the Dogmas of Faith; but you assuredly will find no diversity of judgment on this Tradition as to the Natal day of Christ. You will not find that any Church remembereth the particular time, when the festival of the Nativity was fixed for the eighth day before the Calends of January, thus discovering the beginning of the universal Tradition; a patent sign that this commenced with the very commencement of the Church. Jan Gerard Vos¹⁹ was for thinking, that the determination was not taken before the third century, to adhere to the twenty-fifth of December for this Festival, and that this was decided upon to the end of removing the differences, by which the Churches, in particular those of the East, disagreed among themselves in celebrating the anniversary of a Mystery, of whose precise day the Faithful had no knowledge. But beyond the fact that these differences were not so great, as some now would have it appear, Saint John Chrysostom²⁰ more certainly informed on this matter than Vos was, certainly doth not admit this ignorance of the Natal day of Christ among the Faithful of the first two Centuries. Saint Peter, and Saint Paul, and the other disciples of the Lord, he saith in the Homily, which he delivered on this Festival, taught in the Church that Jesus was born on the 25th of December. *Non sunt nostra, quae loquimur* (thus runneth the text of the Saint in the beautiful version, which was made by Père Fronton le Duc) *Non sunt nostra quae loquimur: majorum sententia est: a Petro, & Paulo, ceterisque Discipulis Christi Ecclesiae hoc didicerunt.* As something taught by the Apostles it is referred to in the book of the Apostolic Constitutions by that Compiler, whoever he may have been, who passeth under the name of Saint Clement,²¹ and who however

¹⁸ In *Notae ad Martyrol. die 25.*

¹⁹ *De tempore Natalis Christi*, p. 1, cap. ult.

²⁰ *Homil. de Nat. Domini 31. de diversis Testamenti locis inter editas a Frontone Duc.*

²¹ *Lib. v, Constit. cap. 12, 13.*

unknown, yet by confession of all is certainly most ancient, and of highest authority in the Church. Euthymius, and Nicephorus Gregoras, Greek Writers, cite a Sermon of Saint Evodius, that Saint Evodius contemporary with the Apostles, who succeeded Saint Peter in the Cathedral of Antioch.²² Now in this Sermon it is clearly stated that the Virgin Mary brought forth on the twenty-fifth of December. I know that modern Critics have difficulty in believing this Sermon the production of an Author so ancient. But yet even these recognize him for very ancient; nor do I think it a reason for doubting its genuineness, that it fixeth the precise day, on which the Eternal word in the cave at Bethlehem cried as a Babe. Clement of Alexandria himself, could not deny, though he held to November, that his opinion was counter to the opinion of the Churches of the East, and of the West, in the third Century; and the beauty of it is, that on this point the conviction of the Churches was also reinforced by the public records of the Gentiles. In fact about the middle of the second Century Saint Justin the Philosopher and Martyr in the second Apology, which he wrote for the Christians, and presented to the Roman Rulers, and to the Senate, speaking of the Census, and of the Enrollment of Judea made under Quirinius, by occasion of which Enrollment the Virgin betook herself to Bethlehem, where she was to bring forth the Desire of the Nations, appealeth to the original books, where this Census was described, preserved in the public Archives in Rome. So that the Faithful of that City were able, by consulting those records, to see whether they were altogether in agreement with that, which the Churches also maintained, touching the time of the divine Birth. To these very Archives appeal was made at the beginning of the third Century by the great Tertullian.²³ Of these divers authentic notices of the day of the Nativity, Saint John Chrysostom spoke in the fourth Century; wherefore the Fathers of the earliest Church knew in what month the Lord was born, not only through teaching given by the Apostles; but because that came to them attested also by the public records, drawn from the Pagan Archives. We must not wonder after this at the universal sentiment of even the Eastern Fathers in the fourth Century, and in those that followed. In fact, both the Anonymous Author of the Work, which is called Imperfect, and Hippolytus an ancient Chronologist of Theban birth,²⁴ of some

²²In Serm cui titulus φῶς Lumen.

²³Lib. iv., *contr. Marcion*, 7.

²⁴*Hom. 9 in Matth.* ἐπὶ Αυγούστου Βασιλέως γεγένητας ὁ Χρῖστος ἐν σπηλαίῳ μινός Δεκεμβρίῳ κέ.

fragments of whose writings found in the Vatican Library Emanuel a Scheelstrate tells us, and Saint Gregory of Nyssa; *Cum nocti ad longitudinis, summum provectae nulla fieri potest accessio, tunc nobis in carne apparit, qui cuncta complectitur*. Saint Gregory of Nyssa, and Theophylact, and a hundred others that might be mentioned, all agree in attesting this Tradition; counter to which there is found no Writer amongst the Greek Fathers, save possibly Saint Epiphanius, whose opinion however neither appeareth clear, nor escapeth being sharply assailed by Saint Jerome. Nay the Church at Antioch, in which, when the ancient records had been lost, there had arisen some uncertainty touching this point, had in the fourth Century documents of the highest authority from the Churches at Constantinople, and at Rome, by which to assure itself of the truth; as was preached to the Innovators with defiant jubilation by Saint John Chrysostom.²⁵

The Latins were even more in agreement on this head. Saint Augustine in the fourth book of his *De Trinitate*, on the one hundred thirty-second Psalm, in the twenty second Sermon *De Tempore*, in the twenty-first *De Sanctis*; Saint Ambrose in his eighth, tenth, and twelfth Sermons; Saint Jerome, Saint Fulgentius, Prudentius,²⁶ and then the whole company of those, that follow in the later Centuries, all mention the twenty-fifth day of December as the Natal day of the Lord, as a thing, of which there neither ever hath been, nor can be a doubt. With the Holy Fathers agree all, so to speak, of the Chronologists, and the Writers of what sort soever; if those alone be excepted, whom we have named; whose opinion, apart from their being so few in number, when placed in comparison with the rest, hath been stigmatized not only by the Catholic authors, but also by many able, and learned Protestant Authors, as capricious, and inconsistent. In fact Wilhelmus Langius was a Protestant; and yet in the Work, that he wrote on the life of Christ, in the second part, second book, second chapter, he stateth it as a thing not only probable, but certain and demonstrated, that the true Natal day of Christ fell on the twenty-fifth day of December. Isaac Casaubon was a Protestant; and yet in the Work, that he wrote with such ardent controversy against Cardinal Baronius, he had to declare, convinced by the evidence, that one must not too easily set aside the most ancient Tradition of the Church, which celebrated the birth of the Saviour on the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month. Richard Montagu was a Protestant; and yet in his

²⁵ *Homil. cit.*

²⁶ Hymn 11.

Ecclesiastical Origins he criticizes as highly ridiculous and inappropriate the view of Joseph Scaliger,²⁷ and of those who held with him, that Christ was born at the Autumnal Equinox. And yet as that is of all opposing views the one most applauded, so is it the least ill founded: *Perridiculum est* (frankly writes the above mentioned author), *perridiculum est quod Scaliger, aliique ineptissime scripserunt*. Among the Protestants may also be placed Jan Gerard Vos previously cited (who if he was not avowedly a Calvinist, was certainly still less a Catholic), a Writer in his Scholarship bold and fearless, who never concealed what seemed to him true, out of respectful deference to Authors holding a different opinion. And yet he, in the first part of his *De tempore Natalis Christi*, in the last chapter, after examining the arguments of one who as to the Natal day of Christ did not conform his opinion to the Tradition of the Church, decideth for the old System, against which, he saith, the opinions of the Ancients are too few, and too much at variance with one another, and the arguments of the Innovating Scholars are too weak, which much as they have undertaken, have proved nothing to destroy a conviction so ancient, and so widely diffused.

It remaineth therefore, O most learned Academicians, it remaineth well established upon the universal consensus of all the Fathers, of all the Centuries, of all Nations, even of all Sects, as against the uncertain and outgrown views of a few either foolish, or capricious persons, that the Birth of our Redeemer took place in the night, which preceded the twenty-fifth day of December; the which was assumed by me as a hypothesis one year ago, though I could not, for want of time, demonstrate its truth.

It ought, in order to complete the subject, to be determined on what day of the week, in what phases of the Moon this grand Mystery befell; all the objections ought to be heard, and resolved which have been brought forward by those that support opposing systems; but to do that would be an ill-judged abuse of your gentle sufferance. O learned Fellow-shepherds; there would be risk of consuming a far longer time, than that prescribed for an Academic Discussion; and beyond this:

“Behold, night falleth, and all Heaven groweth dark;
And the lofty Mountains cast their shadows o’er the fields;
The Stars yield us their company, and the Moon,
And my little sheep are coming from the grove.”²⁸

²⁷ Part i., p. 47.

²⁸ Sannazaro, *Arcad. Eglog.* 2.